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**Department of Telecommunications and Cable to Hold
Verizon Service Quality Hearing in Western Massachusetts**

Additional hearing slated for Chester Town Hall on Monday, Aug. 3

BOSTON – July 30, 2009 – Massachusetts Department of Telecommunications and Cable Commissioner Geoffrey G. Why said today that a hearing will be held in the Town of Chester regarding the state of Verizon Massachusetts' telephone service quality in Western Massachusetts.

The Department has received a number of comments from local municipalities and residents regarding Verizon service, and has previously held four hearings on the subject. The hearing will be held on Monday, Aug. 3, from 6 to 9 p.m., at the theater at the Town of Chester Town Hall, 15 Middlefield Road, Chester.

The Department is holding this hearing as part of its regional investigation of Verizon Massachusetts' telephone service quality in Berkshire, Hampden, Hampshire, and Franklin Counties. The Department opened the regional investigation after the Towns of Egremont, Hancock, Rowe, and Shutesbury each filed petitions with the Department complaining about telephone service quality. After the regional investigation was opened, the Town of Leverett also filed a petition about the town's telephone service quality. The town complaints have focused on line noise and service interruptions, particularly during wet weather.

Prior to opening the regional investigation, the Department issued a request for comment regarding whether a regional investigation was warranted. The Department received 57 responses to its request, including responses from the residents and officials in 21 communities

and the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office. Each of these responses was in favor of a regional investigation.

At the hearings, members of the public and town officials are invited to share their experience and concerns regarding the quality of their telephone service.

"Residents of Western Massachusetts having a problem with their telephone service are encouraged to tell us about it," Why said. "Legitimate and significant concerns have been raised about the reasonableness of the company's service and we want to hear from the residents and find out what's going on."

Public hearings pursuant were held in Franklin, Hampshire, Berkshire, and Hampden Counties in late June and early July. The Chester hearing is the final one scheduled.

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